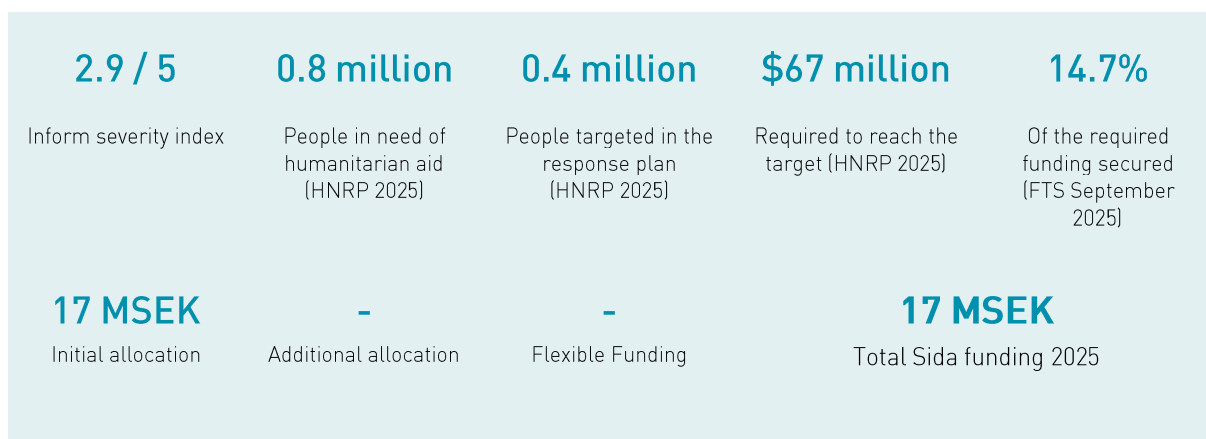


30 September 2025

1. Crisis overviewⁱ



Humanitarian needs in El Salvador are shaped by a combination of climate change, natural disasters, and rising food prices. In recent years, the country has experienced multiple extreme weather events, including hurricanes and tropical storms, that have triggered widespread flooding, landslides, and disruption to agriculture and other sectors. These events have also resulted in loss of life and significant damage to infrastructure.

El Salvador is situated within Central America's dry corridor, making it especially susceptible to droughts, rising sea levels, and intensified El Niño and La Niña phenomena. When combined with the pressures of heavy migration, these natural hazards have contributed to growing food insecurity, water scarcity, poverty, and inequality across the country.

El Salvador continues to face health and socio-economic challenges, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and rising global commodity prices. These factors have further limited household resilience to shocks, reduced coping strategies, and deepened vulnerabilities. In a country of 6.3 million people, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), has identified over 800,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2025, with a response target of 407,500 individuals.

Violence and insecurity remain prevalent in several regions due to the presence of armed groups such as smugglers and traffickers, complicating humanitarian access. This is further compounded by a government-imposed state of emergency aimed at curbing gang-related violence, which restricts civil liberties and limits freedom of movement.

2. Humanitarian needs & affected population

Central America is among the most climate-sensitive regions in the world, facing severe impacts such as loss of life, crop failures, and damage to infrastructure, including homes. The region is expected to experience more frequent droughts, intensified heat waves, and declining annual rainfall, alongside more hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rainfall that trigger flooding and soil erosion. In El Salvador, the El Niño phenomenon has disrupted weather patterns, affecting harvests and driving up the prices of basic goods. As a net food importer, the country is exposed to climate change both directly through extreme weather, and indirectly via rising costs of food imports. These pressures have led to food insecurity, poverty, and malnutrition, particularly among rural families. While the situation is gradually improving due to declining inflation both nationally and regionally, and a partial recovery in agricultural production in neighbouring countries; multidimensional poverty continues to fuel violence and displacement in El Salvador.

The humanitarian crisis in El Salvador and surrounding countries has triggered spirals of multi-directional forced displacement, with significant numbers of people migrating through or from the country. Until 2024, this movement was predominantly northbound, however, in 2025, the trend shifted toward southbound migration for the entire region. El Salvador serves as a country of origin, transit, and return for human mobility. Returnees often face urgent humanitarian needs, including protection and access to basic services, which can overwhelm host communities with limited capacity. In 2024, forced returns surged by over 35 per cent compared to 2023, further straining national resources.

This displacement crisis has made El Salvador's geographic location a strategic position for organized criminal networks engaged in the illicit trafficking of goods, weapons, drugs, and people, further compounding the country's displacement crisis. In response to escalating violence, the government declared a state of emergency in March 2022. While this measure has led to a reduction in violent incidents involving non-state actors, the country now has 2 per cent of its population imprisoned, including non-Salvadorians forcibly returned from third countries. The measure has also had humanitarian consequences, including restricted access for humanitarian organisations. Meanwhile, the continued rise in returns since 2022 places additional pressure on already overstretched systems and services.

These multidimensional factors and risks continue to drive humanitarian needs in El Salvador, primarily in protection, food security, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH). One in four people lives in multidimensional poverty and despite a decline in non-state violence, gangs remain active, and the country still has one of the region's highest homicide rates.

Displaced people, migrants, children, and pregnant or breastfeeding women, face heightened vulnerability, especially those in rural areas. Within these, rural populations, gender-based violence (GBV) survivors, LGBTIQ+ individuals, indigenous groups communities, and people with disabilities are even more affected.

3. The humanitarian response

The Government of El Salvador has responded to these humanitarian and protection needs. The Directorate General of Civil Protection (DGCP), which is the national institution for disaster prevention and response, that monitors risks and promotes preparedness measures. A legal framework is also in place.

El Salvador joined the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) for refugees in 2019 which encourages regional cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Organization of American States (OAS) together provide technical support to the MIRPS implementation. However, the national implementation and enforcement of these legal policies and agreements varies with the available resources, and the response has differed depending on the target group, Salvadorians or migrants. Hence, the Government response has not been sufficient to minimise humanitarian impacts for the most vulnerable.

To assist the Government and the National Civil Protection System in this endeavour, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) takes on the role of effective coordination and integration of the humanitarian community. The HCT is led by the UN Resident Coordinator and the DGCP, with technical assistance from the regional OCHA team and the leadership of the UN agencies coordinating the sectors and sub-sectors.

The HCT publishes appeals and response plans annually. 2025 will be the final year with a humanitarian response plan. As of September 2025, the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) was 14.7 per cent funded. Its main sectors, food security is funded at 26.1 per cent and funding for protection is 5.4 per cent. The global freeze and scale-back of US humanitarian funding announced in January 2025 is having major consequences on aid operations, and the HCT is adapting the response in light of the new funding landscape.

4. Sida's humanitarian allocation

This is Sida's second Humanitarian Crisis Analysis for El Salvador, and it marks Sida's phasing out of the crisis motivated by the increase of humanitarian needs globally and the need to prioritize the most severe humanitarian contexts in Sida's allocation. Sida is allocating SEK 17 million for 2025, to respond to the most urgent humanitarian needs. The allocation will aim to target the most vulnerable, regardless of status and nationality.

The support will primarily be aligned with the objective of the HNRP. i.e. to protect and save the lives of people in humanitarian need, or at risk of humanitarian need, due to the impact of climate events and the effects of human mobility, by supporting the exercise of rights, improving access to quality essential services in emergencies, ensuring intersectoral humanitarian assistance, with a focus on protection, age, gender, diversity and inclusion.

The sectoral focus will be protection with a specific focus on people with intersectional vulnerabilities such as people on the move, children, women, LGBTIQ+ persons, indigenous communities and people with disabilities. Considering the impactful violence, gendered in nature, organisations need to demonstrate conflict sensitivity in their projects and have a proper gender analysis. Promoting international humanitarian law will also be essential, considering the multiple armed actors. Further, as El Salvador is highly vulnerable to climate change and natural hazards, organisations supported need to take into consideration environmental aspects when designing activities.

Through this approach, Sida will promote and ensure compliance with the humanitarian principles and encourage partners to have greater impact, while avoiding aggravating the crisis.

The allocation also takes into consideration where the needs are greatest, to ensure good geographic coverage. Insecurity and violence in turn persists particularly in Ahuachapán, Cabaña, La Libertad, La Paz, Morazán and San Salvador where armed groups are present. Regarding migration, people moving through or from El Salvador usually go from Morazán state (east of the country) to the capital city of El Salvador (central) and onwards to La Hachadura (western) on the border with Guatemala. Yet with the current southbound trend in migration, this route need to be reviewed.

INITIAL ALLOCATION (SEK)		
PARTNER	SECTOR	INITIAL ALLOCATION
ICRC	Protection, IHL, Health	10,000,000
NRC	Protection, Shelter, WASH, Education, FSL, ICLA	7,000,000
TOTAL		17,000,000

ⁱ The 2025 initial allocation of humanitarian funding is based on Sida's humanitarian allocation analysis methodology. The analysis reflects the current humanitarian situation across crises and is being updated continuously with the latest available data. The information in the HCA is based on reports, data, and information from partner organisations and other entities, as well as observations from field visits and dialogue with partners.